

Our colleague, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), and many other civil rights leaders were trained at American Baptist.

Reverend Thomas was ordained as a minister of the gospel in 1970 and was called almost immediately in 1971 to lead Jefferson Street Missionary Baptist Church. There he has established a very powerful symbol for the grace of God on Jefferson Street, a street formerly known for its rock and roll music and blues. The church is now known around the Nation and around the world as a creative force in Christian leadership and community improvement.

Reverend Thomas is one of 13 children raised in Beaumont, Texas; and his love for his native State is still so great that people call him "Tex"; but in Nashville, Tennessee, he is more likely to be called the mayor of Jefferson Street because he has always been a spokesman for the poor and the downtrodden, a spiritual leader for his congregation and the adversities of their daily lives, and a teacher of Governors and Senators and Congressmen and mayors and councilmen, including a Vice President, on what the right thing to do is on civil rights and many other social policy issues.

A small example of Pastor Thomas' work is his prison ministry. I was in his congregation one day when an ex-convict stood up and repaid the money that Pastor Thomas had loaned him, in fact, paid him many times over, thanking the minister for his kindness.

Pastor Thomas is a friend of the friendless. He is an activist who works hard every day to not only improve our lives in this life but to prepare us for the next. He is a man of God who speaks the word of God. And Nashville has been blessed for almost 40 years now to have this fine spiritual example, and we appreciate him every day.

ESSENTIAL BORDER SECURITY

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this week the Associated Press carried a biased and inaccurate story on border security.

The writer said the U.S. has not prevented "even one known militant" from crossing our border with Mexico. I guess the person caught with a telephone number in his pocket linking him to three of the 9-11 terrorists did not count.

The point of border security is to prevent would-be terrorists from entering. Of course, there is no way of knowing how many people did not come because they were worried about being caught.

The reporter then tries to suggest that border security is a waste of money and blames the U.S. Border Patrol for deaths in Mexico of prospective illegal aliens.

Most Americans oppose illegal immigration and support our efforts to know

who is coming into our country and why. They also know better than to blame America for Mexico's failure to stop its own citizens from making a dangerous trip.

HONORING SIEGFRIED AND ROY

(Ms. BERKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. BERKLEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with my colleague, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER), in support of House Resolution 431, a resolution honoring the contributions of my good friends, Siegfried Fischbacher and Roy Horn, two men who are not only great entertainers but noted conservationists and generous philanthropists.

Every year, 36 million people visit Las Vegas hoping to catch a glimpse of these master illusionists. A staple of the Las Vegas community, this legendary duo has brought both magic and success to their many endeavors.

Siegfried and Roy have performed for more than 10 million people and have touched countless thousands of lives in my community and across the globe. Despite their enormous popularity, many do not know of their charitable contributions or world-renowned conservation efforts. Siegfried and Roy have made generous financial and personal donations to the communities and local charities in Las Vegas.

For more than 2 decades they have devoted their efforts to the conservation of Royal White Tigers and Magical White Lions. Today, these breeds are thriving due to Siegfried and Roy's persistence and successful efforts.

On October 3, on his birthday, Roy Horn was injured during a performance. Roy Horn is a close personal friend, and I know his strong spirituality and his persistence will aid him in his recuperation. There has been an outpouring of support from the Las Vegas community and the world, and I lend my voice to those who wish Roy a full and speedy recovery.

To audiences, Siegfried and Roy are illusionists without equal. To their friends, they are beloved and respected for all they have given and all they have accomplished. My thoughts and prayers are with Roy Horn and his family during this difficult time.

VETERANS ASSOCIATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS

(Mr. FOLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FOLEY. Mr. Speaker, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, we will celebrate America's heroes and those are our veterans.

Since President Bush and Secretary Principi have taken office, one as President, one as the head of the VA, we have opened 194 new community

clinics for a total of 676 clinics; 87 percent of the veterans now live within 30 minutes of a VA medical facility.

We have increased enrollment, increased outpatient visits. We have reduced waiting times for our veterans. We have increased prescription drugs coverage for our veterans. We lead for all veterans health clinic quality indicators throughout the entire scope of these facilities.

We have increased homeless veterans outreach with a \$35 million collaborative program with HUD and HHS. We have reduced the inventory of related claims from over 432,000 to 253,000. We have reduced waiting times for claims answers. We have increased national cemeteries, now six new cemeteries: Atlanta, Detroit, South Florida, Fort Sill, Pittsburg, and Sacramento. We remain on course to complete our national shrine commitment to improve the appearance of our national cemeteries.

Veterans have received great response from this administration. We are proud of our record.

TRULY HONORING AMERICAN VETERANS

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the gentleman that preceded me in the well is correct. We should all celebrate Veterans' Day. In fact, we should celebrate Veterans' Day and honor Veterans' Day every day in this Chamber. But I do remember on the night that the war began in Iraq, we passed a resolution supporting the troops and an hour later we passed a budget that cut \$2 billion out of the veterans budget.

I do remember that the President proposed doubling the prescription drug fee for veterans. I do remember that our veterans, the Democrats have offered a proposal to stop taxing disabled veterans, the disabled veterans tax. The President has threatened to veto any legislation which contains that.

So although the gentleman can rattle off those great statistics, that is not the experience of the veterans in my district. They are waiting longer to get minimal service. Fewer of them can get service. They have now established a new Category 8 of veterans who cannot get service even if they have served with valor in combat.

It is one thing to get up here and spout statistics and that, but the reality is can your veterans get the service they need that we promised when they need it; and the answer is for many, no.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION NEEDED IN BURMA

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)